

Facts & Information

August 1999

Reducing unwanted phone solicitor calls

If you hate being interrupted at home with unwanted sales calls, you can fight back. To do so, you should understand and assert your rights and take measures to safeguard your personal information.

Do Not Call Rule

When you receive an unwanted call from a salesperson, clearly tell the caller that you do not wish to receive any further calls from that company or organization. State law prohibits a solicitor from calling you back within a year of such a request. Federal law prohibits calls for 10 years after such a request. If a company calls you back within a year after you have made such a request, you can file a complaint with the state attorney general's office.

Since your request only affects the company or organization that called you, you will have to make this request every time you receive an unwanted call. The requirement does not apply to charitable and tax-exempt organizations but it does not hurt to let them know that you do not wish to be called again.

Do not be shy about interrupting the sales call with this request. You own the phone, it's your time and it's your right.

When they can call and what they must say

Solicitors must not call you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. (your local time). The caller must state name of the organization and purpose of the call within the first 30 seconds. They must also provide a phone number or address where they can be contacted.

Limits on recorded message

Federal and state law restrict the use of prerecorded messages in sales calls. You should not be subjected to a recorded sales message on your phone unless you have already given permission or if you already have established a business relationship with the company making the sales pitch.

Be Proactive

Reduce unwanted calls to your home by writing the Direct Marketing Association which maintains a list of consumers who do not wish to receive solicitation calls and makes it available to companies who make such calls. Mail your name, telephone number including area code along with address and zip code to: Telephone Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 9014, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9014. For more information, call 212-768-7277.



P.O. Box 47250
1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Local: (360)664-1160
Toll Free: 800-562-6150
TTY: (360)586-8203

Web site: www.wutc.wa.gov
Email: info@wutc.wa.gov

All UTC publications are
available in alternate formats.
Call (360)664-1133.

Unlisted number will not stop unwanted calls

Even if you have an unlisted phone number, you can still receive unwanted calls. Companies you have done business with may have sold your information to other organizations or businesses. Companies can also acquire your number by enticing you or a member of your household to enter a contest or drawing.

Protect your personal information

Be careful about entering contests or giving out your telephone number. Make a point to inform companies you do business with that you do not wish them to resell or reuse your personal information. Most companies will not ask your permission to resell or reuse your personal information but they will honor your request. If they do not, consider doing business with a different company.

Complaints

Complaints regarding unwanted sales calls can be directed in writing to the state's Attorney General's office and the Federal Communications Commission. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the UTC consumer line at 1-800-562-6150.

Federal Communications Commission

Common Carrier Bureau
Consumer Complaints
Mail Stop 1600A2
Washington DC 20554

Office of the Attorney General

Consumer Protection Division
900 Fourth Avenue Suite 2000
Seattle WA 98164
800-551-4636